



## POLITICAL PROCESS AND GOVERNANCE



Photo: courtesy of IRI

**Students of a Youth Civic Camp in July 2006 participate in an election exercise.**

### THE CHALLENGE

2008 was marked by on-going political turmoil that slowed democratic and economic reforms. Legislative action is needed to ensure further progress on priority reforms to clarify and balance relations between governance institutions and to strengthen the political system. To consolidate democratic advances, Ukraine needs an electoral system that assures participatory, free and fair electoral processes; a pluralistic and open party system accountable to the citizens; and improved legislative process.

### OVERVIEW

Continued political crisis and instability illustrate Ukraine's pressing need to develop and consolidate its democratic institutions and processes. To this end, USAID supports political party development, civic monitoring of political processes, parliamentary institution building, and legislative reform. As a complement to other civil society building activities, USAID assistance encourages active, informed citizen participation in the political process.

### OUR PROGRAMS

#### Political Process Program in Ukraine

The program supports more effective, democratic political parties; improved governance practices; free, fair and participatory electoral processes; and civic participation in the democratic process. This includes training programs for political party activists, local elected officials and politically engaged youth. The program also focuses on building NGO capacity to increase its role in a democratic society. One program component includes an annual public opinion survey to gauge citizen attitudes on significant socio-political issues.

#### Parliamentary Development Program (PDP)

PDP works to strengthen the capacity of Ukraine's Parliament in becoming a progressive democratic institution. This includes support for more effective and transparent legislative and policy decision-making; improving the parliament's lawmaking processes; strengthening legislative oversight of the executive; making the Verkhovna Rada's operations more effective; developing more efficient and democratic internal management systems; institutionalizing staff and organizational development capacity within the Parliament, the Presidential Secretariat, and the Cabinet of Ministers; and increasing access by and the involvement of citizens in the legislative process. In FY 2009, the program was extended to focus on legislative policy development and to expand operations to national executive structures.

### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

#### Political Process Program in Ukraine

- USAID partners, the International Republican Institute (IRI) and the National Democratic Institute (NDI), trained 1,290 political party activists. As a result of trainings, local activists applied innovative outreach techniques to build closer ties between their political parties and civic groups in their respective communities. Activities also focused on involving youth from all major political parties in an effort to expand the political dialogue, help bridge regional divides and cultivate future

## PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Support free, fair and participatory elections;
- Strengthen political parties organizationally, and help them respond to their constituencies to better represent citizen concerns;
- Equip NGOs and youth to play an active role in the political process;
- Strengthen the Ukrainian Parliament in its efforts to meet standards of progressive democratic parliaments and support more effective and transparent decision-making in the legislative and executive branches of government.

## IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS:

**National Democratic Institute,  
International Republican  
Institute, IFES,  
Indiana University**

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USAID/Ukraine Development Outreach  
& Communications, tel. (380 44) 537  
4600 or visit <http://ukraine.usaid.gov>**

political party leaders. The Institutes' governance initiatives emphasized the importance of managing public expectations and effectively communicating leadership messages to the public.

- IRI provided governance & communications training for 313 government officials from 18 oblasts; trained 307 locally elected officials in 12 oblasts from all major political parties on practical skills such as constituent service, working with the mass media, constructive faction work, and understanding the budget process; and trained 158 politically active youth from 6 oblasts in youth mobilization and campaign techniques.
- IRI cooperated with local authorities in 24 oblasts to conduct public hearings on issues of local importance (i.e. the accountability of elected officials, waste management and communal services reforms); 1,366 citizens participated in the hearings, which resulted in changes in local laws and recommendations to the Parliament and other authorities. As a result of the hearings, 4 new laws were passed by local councils, 7 decisions were approved by commissions of local councils, 11 recommendations made to regional executive authorities and 2 recommendations to the Parliament.
- Since 2004, IRI has been conducting *Youth Political Leadership Schools* to increase youth engagement in political processes. In 2007-2008, seminars were conducted in Zhytomyr, Kharkiv, Luhansk, Dnipropetrovsk, Crimea that trained 150 individuals.
- In 2008, NDI conducted 20 regional trainings with party members to improve voter outreach techniques and develop local messages for national political parties. NDI also focused on grassroots voter contact, improved campaign skills for political parties, and strengthened internal communications structures.
- NDI continued strengthening OPORA, a national network of young, non-partisan grassroots activists and supported formation of an NGO coalition on housing, which has quickly grown to include 45 organizations across Ukraine. The coalition focuses on raising Members' of Parliament awareness of housing issues and advocates for the adoption of national legislation to regulate condominium associations as part of Communal Services Reform legislation.

## Parliamentary Development Program (PDP)

- USAID assisted the Verkhovna Rada (VR) to increase its transparency, openness and committee oversight capacity through training for staff and MPs in legislative and budget processes, committee operations, oversight and public accessibility. PDP developed and published comprehensive guides on the legislative process for MPs. Of the 450 national legislators, 43% either participated or had their personnel attend new member orientation workshops organized for each VR faction. Web design assistance resulted in five new committee websites.
- Since its inception in 1995, USAID has supported a parliamentary internship program, which has provided 846 promising young graduates of Ukrainian universities with opportunities to be engaged in parliamentary processes. While the program has contributed to further opening the VR's operations to the public, it also has opened new doors for program alumni. Over 40 percent of former interns remain in public service, and many of them now hold high elected and executive posts. This year, the program was expanded to ministries and offices of the Cabinet of Ministers and the Secretariat of the President of Ukraine.